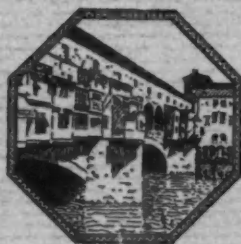


Journal of The American Institute of ARCHITECTS



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October 1944

The Journal Holds a Competition

Florence Is No Longer Florence

Designing a Bermuda Air Base

Self-Help

The Artistic Debate

F. L. Griggs, Pen Draftsman

Here Stands the B.A.I.D.

35c

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The Journal Holds a Competition

HERE'S a new form of competition, open only to architects, whether members of The A.I.A. or not.

In view of the JOURNAL's size and WPB paper restrictions, the extensive illustration of a piece of contemporary architecture is beyond us. The eight or ten illustration pages required to bring before you a comprehensive presentation of some architectural achievement are available in the commercial magazines, but not in the JOURNAL.

What we *could* do, and purpose doing, is to show, of notable contemporary works, a single detail representing that element of the structure, furnishing or equipment that most nearly achieved the architect's intention. All too frequently, a completed work disappoints its designer in many ways—else we should make little progress. But usually there is at least one detail of the whole that brings something of a thrill to the designer himself; it may be a detail in which sculptor, or painter, or landscape

designer, or interior decorator collaborated successfully; it may be some particularly happy choice of form or materials; it may be an ingenious solution of some challenging problem of plan or construction. Whatever it is, the architect finds it a point of satisfaction; it worked out as he had hoped—or better.

Here, then, is the competition. Any architectural office may submit to the JOURNAL one detail photograph—a really *good* photograph, not smaller than 5"x7"—from completed work. Each photograph should be accompanied by a separate sheet, giving title, architect's name and address, and a brief description or explanatory comment from which a descriptive caption for the illustration could be written. These photographs, without descriptive sheets, and bearing merely an identifying number, will go before a Jury of architects for selection as to which details are to be published, without designation as to relative merit. The Jury: Ralph Walker, F.A.I.A., New

York; Richard Koch, F.A.I.A., New Orleans; Alfred Shaw, F.A.I.A., Chicago; Arthur Loveless, F.A.I.A., Seattle; Reginald D. Johnson, F.A.I.A., Los Angeles. Offices of these Jury members are, of course, *hors concours*.

Submissions must be in the JOURNAL's office not later than November 1st, to be considered by the Jury. The winning details should appear in the JOURNAL's

issues for January, February and March, 1945.

If the results measure up to our hopes, a new Jury will then carry on for a later competition of similar character. The publication of such details, after passing through the double sieve of the designer himself and a jury of his peers, should bring to our illustration pages some material of unique distinction.

Designing a Bermuda Air Base

By Alfred Shaw, F.A.I.A.

SPINOZA warns us of how we all — through the inescapable distortions of our individual imaginings—see the same things differently. So the many contributors to the Bermuda scheme (from Admiral Greenslade and Colonel Arthur's original British-American Committee down to the stenographer who wrote the last period in our report) will likely retain different images and may even disagree with me.

When, for reasons which have never been given out, we as architects, along with our distinguished engineering associates, Ford, Bacon & Davis, Metcalf & Eddy,

were asked if we would enter into a contract to design the Bermuda Air Base, there was in us an almost physical mixture of joy, restrained action and high responsibility. Familiarity with the islands over some years of pleasant visiting gave me some sense of the architectural and psychological problems, and we were advised that, by the instruction of the President himself, we were to concern ourselves with the visual integration of the project into the native scene. This was also good camouflage.

This base was not only a physical problem. Those displaced

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were the least sophisticated of all Bermudians and were by this token closely rooted into the life of the land and sea. I recall, in a house alone on a low headland, standing in her doorway, a woman who looked out at our original survey party and with her fists clenched down at her sides, shouted at us, "I hate you, I hate you all!" So would have I—her whole simple native life was going.

So a year before Pearl Harbor and with our then casual attitude, we had, along with our military engineering, an awareness of the humanities and the physical beauty of the tiny island we were disturbing.

To achieve an integration and at once a military base was always our goal, and the approved scheme does this. Those temporary structures built after Pearl Harbor are to be replaced by permanent structures "when, as and if," and those permanent structures now built are evidence that the integration can be and is partially achieved.

In this, as in other later war projects, the architects fell into the area planning naturally. By general consent, with fairly explicit directives, subject to usual military shifts and a general understanding of the mechanics, we

patchworked and jigsawed together into a site plan the complicated requirements of post and airfield, while the engineers built up sets of design standards for water supply, utilities, marine construction, and coordinated them with local materials and climatic conditions. And the climate of Bermuda is that of a ship at sea in that latitude of the Atlantic.



For instance, there was the well-known water catchment and storage problem, but it had never been posed in such volume.

There was the duplicate water supply of salt and fresh-water lines.

There was the problem of long runways for land-based bombers and transports on an archipelago of tiny islands on the thin rim of an extinct volcano.

There was the fascinating geological uniqueness of the place.

There was, as part of our daily lives, the heat, humidity and violent winds of the mid-Atlantic weather.

There was the isolation of a British colony in war time, which affected construction and permanent living problems.

There were bridges and causeways to be left out or put in, as

civil and military uses were considered.

And there was the unbelievable beauty of the place!



The early stages of planning were, for all their large-scale approach and engineering soundness, most picturesque. These confidential first-stage sketches on highly combustible paper were made and kept in one of the few wood houses in St. Georges, and were actually made on the second floor over the ovens of the town bakeshop, where the smell of fresh pastry and the conversation of the bakers came up through actual holes in the floor. The officer-in-charge was in shorts, and his transportation was by bicycle or carriage, as was ours.

The next stage was in the scientific atmosphere of the famous Bermuda Biological Station where, at meals as at leisure, we heard of a newly discovered *nemertea* with a multiple, inside-out exploding proboscis, and of the amazingly accurate chronology of the love life of a certain phosphorescent marine worm.

Then we moved to the comparatively ample and palatial background of the entire St. George Hotel, and we had a site plan

complete with structures, roads, utilities and air field; partly on old and partly on new land, and the pace was stepped up. The Army had motor cars instead of bikes, and so did we, and enormous yellow LeTourneaus and caterpillars came piling off the cargo steamers. All this was to the stormy mid-winter accompaniment of the convoy system and the heroic old veterans of the British Merchant Marine, who hung around the White Horse Bar waiting for their secret disappearance into the Atlantic.

Packing the large list of structures into a small area, preserving the scanty wind-blown cedars, and placing the fill for the several runways in the shallowest possible water, was a complicated and exciting problem contributed to by all concerned and coordinated by the architects. A scheme was finally mutually agreed upon, and detail drawings were now coming out in rolls. The contractors had moved a hunk of America—personnel, equipment and energy—and dirt was flying, and the bottom of the ocean was coming out on top as new land.

The dredged fill, a pale grey, almost white, was almost too exquisite to be walked on. It ran

from fine, sandy, cream-like clay to limestone rock, sand and shells; shells in great quantity and many species and of great individual beauty. And when it broke up, it packed shells and stone down into a hard, well-drained mass almost immediately. Then the high lime content produced with the sea water a cementing action which was a gift of the gods. A surfacing from dredged rock, later crushed, was all that was necessary, and ideal runways were finished and being used as they grew out into Castle Harbor. In the light of later projects of greater size under greater stress and even under combat conditions, it now looks as though we could have and should have built everything before Pearl Harbor. Here it became evident that the architect and the engineer can work in harmony. The architect can, however high he holds his head, be a realist; and the hard-boiled engineer seems not to have completely killed off the poet which is born into all of us.

Although most architects are aware of the reasonable simplicity and resultant beauty of the Bermudian idiom in stone, it is evidently only after intense detail study and experience that they realize how purely functional this

style really is. A whole paper could be and should be written on this subject. This functionalism (small *f*) makes International Functionalism appear by comparison, non-functional. We are all familiar with the neat economy of getting soft stone from a site or near it and sawing it into blocks for walls and tile for roofs, and the use of roofs for water catchment and to let it then harden into masonry.



But there are other things. For instance, the yoke-like, overdoor label molding is a masterpiece of forming in plaster on stone to send all the rain driven against the wall off to the sides and out onto the ground. The porous sandstone is plastered with a stucco made mostly of the pulverized stone and a "trace" of cement, and then covered with a lime-wash made of native lime containing all these same elements. This functional ornament, like the walls, becomes as integrated as your eyebrows. As time goes on, in the damp air, this same combination on roofs becomes monolithic. The seven original coats of white lime-wash on the roof tile have a progressing refinement, from a creamy sandy lime mortar to a final coat of pure

lime-wash, so that each successive coat has an affinity with its neighbor, above and below.

Likewise, the simple gabled tile on the top of chimneys. They give a draft but keep out heavy rains; the vents for the roof space are made by setting up the tile themselves to give a small roof with opening at each end, and the steps of the roof tiles on slabs perform a most necessary and surprising function. The stepped tile obviously lets the rain flow down to the stone gutter, but also keeps the water from blowing up the roof which it damn well would in the frequent fifty- and one-hundred mile winds.

Insects, termites *et al*, have no effect on Bermuda cedar, so by strips or blocks, in economic sizes now that cedar is a rarity, the structural timbers are separated from foundations.

Many old Bermuda enthusiasts will tell you that the charm of the place has been touched by the advance of an inhuman and ugly civilization. And there will be a difference in the actual area of the military establishments. Likewise, soldiers and sailors on leave will be evident in St. Georges and Hamilton.

But there is no reason to give

up to these fears. As small as the islands are, the military areas are no great proportion of them. From the sea and with these areas, they can look well if the temporary structures are replaced by permanent ones in the native idiom.



This policy should be carried out after the war, and the motor vehicle can be restricted—if necessary, on a highway of its own; and this has been recommended, on the roadbed of that incredible Tooner-ville Railway.

If the oligarchy of Bermuda families, and the few Americans who have any influence with them, make up their minds that they want the beauty, quiet and simplicity of old Bermuda, they can have it. Here, as in New York or Canberra, it is a question of planning. And a sympathetic architecture and landscape and schedule of life not only can be, but should be, preserved. It would be easy to let this island (which is going to be so terribly close to the mainland by air) lose its own pace and its own funny beauty, to imitate the shabby compromises of American "resorts." It will be a little difficult, like all good accomplishments, to preserve a quality

of its own. What has been done up to now can be continued. The mechanical revolution and even this war will not be so conspicu-

ously visible in the parade of history as we, with our noses to the stupidities of our own times, are sometimes apt to believe.

Florence Is No Longer Florence

By Herbert L. Matthews

Excerpts by permission from a dispatch in
The New York Times of September 1, 1944.

FLORENCE is no longer the Florence that the world has known for 400 years, and this is the shocking surprise that anyone gets on coming to the city after its "liberation." No previous accounts that this correspondent had read or heard prepared him for the discovery that the heart of Florence is gone.

This is the culmination of German vandalism to date, but there is also one other aspect that must go down indelibly on the pages of history—not a single Florentine gave or even risked his life to save the bridges and the medieval core of his city.

It will be recalled that the Nazis blew up the bridges in the early morning hours of August 4, after a thorough preparation lasting five days. During that time they evacuated 50,000 persons from a 200-

meter zone on both sides of the Arno River. They then set the explosive charges, tranquilly looted houses at their leisure and finally set the fuses without anything more than verbal protests of the Florentines.

They did not blow up the Ponte Vecchio, and that was their greatest crime, because instead they destroyed many medieval palaces at both ends, changing the whole aspect of old Florence. What little credit they previously got for sparing the Ponte Vecchio with its old shops must now be withdrawn. They knew that the wreckage of the bridge, with its ponderous superstructure, would stick out of the water in this dry season, making an easy path for bulldozers, so they did infinitely worse.

Moreover, the Germans, undoubtedly knowing what they were

doing, used much heavier explosive charges in every case than were required, which gave an added touch of vandalism to their deed.

Lest anyone think that this correspondent is exaggerating, here is a brief account of the destruction, taken from the official files. To those who know Florence it will be unnecessary to do more than tell what is gone.



The section on the left bank of the Arno around the Ponte Vecchio, comprising the Via dei Bardi, Via dei Guicciardini, Borgo San Jacopo and Piazza Santa Felicita suffered dreadful destruction. Nearly the whole of the Via dei Guicciardini is gone except the Guicciardini Palace and the Franceschi Palace next to it, both of which were damaged.

On Borgo San Jacopo every house up to the Church of San Jacopo and the corner of the Via dei Guidi has disappeared. The whole of the Via dei Bardi on both sides up to the Piazza dei Mozzi is no more.

Palace after palace, dating from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, are now heaps of rubble. In the wreckage lie such things as the ancient manuscripts, books and

art objects of the *Societa Colombaria*, which is a tremendous loss to the world.

Now let us look at the other end of the Ponte Vecchio. On Lungarno Acciajoli the medieval houses of Garducci and the sixteenth-century Acciajoli Palace have little standing. Some of the finest medieval streets of Florence are gone. The Piazza del Pesce, with all its old houses, some of the fourteenth century, is completely destroyed. The Church of Santo Stefano now stands clear, its facade cracked in two, its interior severely damaged. Its 93-year-old priest refused to leave when the Germans ordered him to and died of concussion—the only true martyr that Florence provided on that night.

The east side of the Via Por Santa Maria is all gone as far as Santo Stefano. So have all the old houses between the Via Lamberjesca and the Via Vacchereccia. Most of the houses between the Via Vacchereccia and the Via Calmaruzza also are gone.

On the west side of Por Santa Maria, the Torre degli Amadei, the most beautiful medieval tower in Florence, was destroyed except for one precarious wall on the Arno side. The Girolami and Gherardini towers likewise were

destroyed. All the old houses between the tower of the Buondelmonti—itsself badly damaged—and the loggia of Mercato Nuova are rubble. The loggia itself was damaged, as well as every house on the south side of the piazza.

One of the greatest losses is the Palace of the Gueff Party, a fourteenth-century edifice embellished by Brunelleschi and Vasari. It is terribly damaged, its roofs, among other things, being about gone. The Vasari Room, with his frescoes, was destroyed.

The terrific concussion did damage for many blocks around. The Uffizi Gallery building suffered considerably, with many ceilings, all of its windows, many of its grotesques and much stucco lost or damaged. Fortunately the upper floor was empty. The corridor that runs across the Arno on the Ponte Vecchio to the Pitti Palace naturally was badly damaged. A hundred yards of it at the Arco dei Sardi are completely gone. Even the Pitti Palace lost all of its windows and had damage to some ceilings with frescoes.

It must be remembered that this is only the first survey. No one can tell yet how much unseen damage there is, how much weakening of walls, ceilings and frescoes. It

may take years for some of the damage done that night to show itself.



Now we come to the bridges. It is only today, when they are gone, that one can realize what they contributed to Florence's characteristic landscape. The Ponte Vecchio alone stands, its shops looted and somewhat damaged, but it can soon be restored.

The greatest single loss in the whole of Florence is the Bridge of Santa Trinita, which often was called "the most beautiful bridge in the world." Nothing remains of it but the two intermediate pylons. The four statues of the seasons fell into the river and have been fished out, much the worse for wear.

The thoroughness of the destruction of all bridges is breathtaking. I have never seen anything like it in previous campaigns. It goes far beyond military necessity, which would have been served by blowing down enough of each bridge to prevent a crossing. The Germans know that Bailey bridges can be erected anywhere in a matter of hours, with command of both banks.

The lovely Ponte alle Grazie or

Rubaconte, constructed in 1237 but modernized and widened in the last century, has literally nothing standing. The same is true of the Ponte alla Carraja, which dates back to 1218, and the modern Ponte de Vittoria and the iron bridge.

Thus there has been lost forever that famous view of the old houses on the Arno and the bridges that cross it. That is why Florence as the world knew it is no more. Text books and guide books will have the same great places to describe, like the Palazzo Vecchio, the Badia, Bargello, Duomo, Giot-

to's Tower, the Baptistery, and so forth, but it will not be the Florence of the Medici, it will not be that perfection, that utterly harmonious atmosphere that made it unique in the world.

The heart of old Florence is indeed gone and when we who knew it in the last days of its glory are no more there will be none left to carry on the vision of its greatness. Nothing will remain but books, photographs and legends to tell future generations what Florence was but never will be again because of Teuton madness.

Milwaukee Wants a Houser

THE City of Milwaukee seeks a well-qualified man or woman for the position of Executive Director of its Housing Authority. The post is under Civil Service, but the examination of applicants will not be the ordinary type of Civil Service test. It will consist of a questionnaire covering training and experience, and, for those whose professional records are most promising, an oral interview by an advisory committee. The salary is \$5500, from which there is a small deduction for the pension fund (re-

turnable in the event of resignation). There is also a cost-of-living adjustment, at present amounting to \$30.64 per month. The appointee will have both a planning and an administrative function to perform in Milwaukee's program in the field of blight, slum clearance and the provision of low-rent housing for the underprivileged. Further details may be had on application to Herbert W. Cornell, Secretary, City Service Commission, City Hall, Milwaukee, Wis.

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The Artistic Debate

By Charles D. Maginnis, F.A.I.A.

Excerpts by permission from the article in *Liturgical Arts* of August, 1944.

DEFINITIONS are notoriously difficult. How, for example, may we with certainty identify the artistic modernist and his product? With his own label, I think, he is sufficiently content but reasonably protesting when his work is characterized as "modernistic." It is admittedly an adjective that cannot be kept invariably innocent. Yet an alternative is not obvious. "Contemporaneous" is indicated, but its adoption would lead to another distress for no modernist would be satisfied to be called a contemporanean.

It must be recognized that artistic unrest has come to the mood of revolt. The iconoclastic temper, of course, is not disagreeable to those who seek symbols for political subversiveness, but the modern movement has more than enough plausibility to protect it from the suspicion that there is anything sinister either in its origin or its mission. Art is an element continually in flux. The

current, which flows for long in quiet reaches, breaks now and then into storm. Whether in quiet or in violence, however, it is a reflection of social thought. At times it anticipates in a flash of prophecy, and then we are shocked and puzzled by its eccentricities, seeing no resemblance to our thinking. Art, therefore, is ever in the atmosphere of controversy. Whatever our attitude to its present manifestations, however they flout the traditional graces, we must perceive that in the new technologies we are confronted with inescapable challenge.



Nothing is more evident than that the world which is in the making will be an uncomfortable place for the conservative. The surge of revolutionary thought that is bearing it toward us is already beating against the foundations of many cherished institutions. Ideas we have thought venerable are under daring assault. We are not ex-

pected to question the relevance of this impending dispensation that has behind it so irresistible an authority as science. We may merely speculate on its political and cultural implications. So assured indeed is the new order that it prescribes its accommodating type of intellect. Many social philosophers have held our present world in a magnificent contempt, and a new one is now awaited with a faith that progress is inevitably forward. Our complacency is not quite undisturbed at the release of unfamiliar and terrible forces that have the capacity to lay our world in ruins and puts its trust in their intrinsic geniality. They are of human genius, and man's spirit when it comes to higher discipline must ultimately catch up with his mechanisms.



In its implication upon art, history offers no parallel to such a moment. It was the industrial revolution that compelled art to its first compromise with machinery. We recall that Ruskin inveighed against it with a splendid passion, but lived to see the dreaded violation of the English landscape by the steam-engine. Burne-Jones and William Morris and a devoted fol-

lowing fought valiantly to save the craftsman from the machine, but had to submit to a sacrifice over which we are still uneasy. Art is now to submit to larger surrender of historic prerogative.

The thoughtful conservative is troubled only by the novelty of principles. If he is distressed by the singularities of contemporary art, it is because he is apprehensive of the mechanical civilization of which they are the indication. At a time when educators are solicitous about the fate of the humanities and religious leaders are girding themselves for high spiritual conflict, why should this be pronounced an unreasonable disposition? Conservatism gives ground slowly but, merely as intellectual friction, it is a wholesome restraint on the violence of revolutionary advance. As we experience the new art with a sense of shock we should perceive that this is not independent of the intention. It is an art of protest. As such the aim of its protagonists is, as it were, directed beyond the target. We may count in time upon some moderation of their claims. Meanwhile, they are not disconcerted that our emotions are unresponsive to their immediate propositions. They can point to the experience of innovation in music and

the conquests over the ear. The harried conservative, compelled into silence by the resurgence of Wagner, yields meekly to the idea that in the very provocativeness of the new art is presumed to lie the prophecy of its vindication. Our sensibilities, always under assault, do often submit to novelty but not inevitably.

Abrupt, not to say violent, deflections from artistic tradition must expect to encounter a public prejudice that is not readily convinced and is rarely convinced by argument. The inscrutability of public taste is notoriously exemplified in the fashioning of millinery, which of late has so flouted all detectable principles. That an influential proportion of society is capable of this perversity is a phenomenon that is not to be too lightly dismissed as we estimate the fortunes of art under the control of logic. The advocates of the new architectural austerities, for example, might well tremble over the encounter with a sentiment so incorrigible. There comes to mind the episode of the Roycroft furniture, the aggressive integrity of whose craftsmanship was a challenge that hushed for a whole generation the mention of Chippendale and Sheraton. It was a furni-

ture of honesty, but it had a brief life. Presumably the ladies did not relish its uncompromising masculinity, for we now encounter it only in the atmosphere of rectories.



Unlike architecture, the arts of painting and sculpture are independent of rational law and easily develop fluctuations of public opinion. It was found upon his death that Vermeer had mortgaged a dozen of his little paintings to his baker. Only recently one of his canvases brought \$400,000. It was an extraordinary appeal from historical verdict. The obvious revival of respect for the disparate genius of El Greco is also to be remarked. On the other hand, the vogue of Sargent, for long sustained, is now clearly on the decline. As we speculate at the impermanence of his reputation, resting as it did upon a technical endowment corresponding with the great masters, we wonder if he is outmoded or has only entered a temporary eclipse. To an extent, perhaps, he was the victim of his extraordinary facility, but the revulsion of feeling against the representational theory of portraiture would appear the fitting explana-

tion. He recorded his sitters imitatively and the camera, it is held, does that very nicely. The painter is now invited to approach animate and inanimate nature subjectively, recording not the aspect perceived by his eye, but as it translates itself through his personal emotions. Whatever its merits, this idea provides an immediate release from obligations that were inherent in the academic theory, eliminating difficult skills of which draftsmanship was always held to be of high consequence. There is left no longer a grammar by which criticism may be enlightened. The ugliness of a painting may actually be bad drawing or only a triumphant manifestation of the artist's subjectivity. Who is to say? The most provoking of canvases finds the critic disarmed.



Sculpture is equally affected. It is not to be denied that in both arts there has been compensating enterprise in the pursuit of the abstract, some of which is highly imaginative and admirable. But there is more than a hint of paradox in the straining of the modern principle. Much of the new product is itself suspect and appears merely an exchange of famil-

iar for unfamiliar history. The distorted form and uncouth composition now so characteristic of modernity and emancipation are definitely reminiscent of the primitivism of Europe. Then it was an unconscious immaturity. Today it is a sophisticated defiance of the principles which carried art through the centuries to high conclusions. Is it not easy to excuse the conservative who pauses, before embracing ideas which make for such sweeping invalidation? He is prepared to be hospitable to the qualifying ideas which denote the changing time, but he needs convincing that the world could actually have lived so long in artistic ignorance.

It is architecture, however, which must meet the full impact of the new thought. Here it presents itself with plausibility, for it invites our exploitation of materials of novel genius that logically make for untraditional expressions. If the obligation to embrace these new media could be established to the exclusion of historic materials, it would mean the end of traditionalism. The conservative, however, refuses to concede the invalidity of bricks and stones, with the memory of all they have made for graciousness. Economic law may be the

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factor which ultimately decides the issue in the operation of the two theories. And here, for the clarity of the matter, it should be emphasized that the traditionalist, sensitive to the stigma of archaeology, makes no claims for the literal relevance of European precedent, but holds to the view that, in the absence of a national vernacular, he is justified in an eclecticism that brings what is best in the past to modern correspondence. In the process he may be occasionally provoking, but it is to be observed that in the main his architecture is developing more and more simplicity and freshness of design and a reaching out for independence. He shrinks from the idea of flinging history to the waste-basket in the persuasion that parting with the past should be a more gentle and lingering and sentimental experience.

To the modernist, ferro-concrete is the providential instrument of liberation whose logic makes for an architecture without memories. We know something of its uncompromising characteristics. Its satisfactions are frankly limited to an unrhetoical rendering of function on a theory that beauty inevitably follows. It is another point of difference, for traditionally beauty in

architecture is the *felicitous* expression of function and as such implies the enlistment of the imagination.



Enough perhaps has been said to bring the merits of the controversy to the non-professional understanding. Neither argument can be vindicated by words. The eye, which is the best witness of an artistic philosophy, when all is said, must be converted. This propitiation has prospered as yet with difficulty, but we should encourage no illusions. A startling change is to be looked for in the American scene. It is little appreciated how effectually the new architectural thought is organized. The professional schools are so uniformly committed to it that soon a new generation of architects will know no other thinking. It is already a tide that is not to be stemmed. At present we are embarrassed by the confusion of its address, for there is good and bad modernism. One of its ablest advocates, Mr. Barry Byrne, raised a warning voice at some of its provocations in a recent number of *America*. Reacting to an exhibition of Catholic art he says, "There is still a mistaken tendency to confuse a Cath-

olic-derived art with that commercially-inspired modernism that now exists in quantity, but less happily, without much quality. Nothing could be more disastrous to the right direction for a Catholic-derived art than that it should be confused with this spurious artistic modernism." This is a wholesome note. For the signs had been growing that a capitulation to the new philosophy might lead ecclesiastical art merely into new forms

of aberration. The limited content of the new architecture has been admirably adequate to realistic enterprise, but it has yet to demonstrate convincingly that it has the resources of eloquence to be expected from the higher challenge. Its biting logic has notably cleansed and stimulated architectural thought in its solicitude for first principles. In the play of its original enterprise it may ultimately come to vindication.



"Flexible Heating" Competition

UNDER the sponsorship of the Bituminous Coal Institute, a competition calls for the design of a six-room house basement that will provide for heating with any type of fuel. The competition has been approved by The A.I.A. as of the Secondary Type—that is, not leading to the erection of a definite structure.

One sheet, 20" x 30", is to contain, in black line: 1/4"-scale plans; four 1/4"-scale sectional views of basement interior (an isometric view may be substituted for 2 sectional views); and other details

as desired by the competitor. Any architect, engineer, draftsman or designer in the Continental United States is eligible, with the usual exceptions. The jury, of four architects and one engineer, will be announced after the judging. Prizes: \$1500, \$1000, \$750, and 15 awards of \$100, maturity value of Series E War Bonds. Closing date, Nov. 15, 1944. Copies of the program, with further details and title-pasters for the drawings, obtainable from Kenneth K. Stowell, A.I.A., Professional Adviser, c/o *Architectural Record*, 119 W. 40th St., New York 18, N. Y.

OCTOBER, 1944

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F. L. Griggs

SOME INFORMAL AND PERSONAL NOTES ON HIS
METHODS OF PEN DRAWING HEREWITH SET DOWN
BY HIS CORRESPONDENT,

Frank Chouteau Brown, F.A.I.A.

IN December, 1912, while on a trip abroad, the writer saw on exhibition at the Baille Galleries in London some of the "Etchings and Pen Drawings of F. L. Griggs." Frederick Landseer Griggs was then a young English artist, whose first work to come to my attention had been in a volume of the Macmillan series of "Highways and Byways" in the different counties. Most of the first-issued volumes in this series had been illustrated by Joseph Pennell and Hugh Thompson. The sheer technical mastery of the art of expressing the romantic appeal of English architecture in his chosen medium was so convincing that a letter was sent to the artist from Paris, in care of his publishers. It brought back a reply from him from Chipping-Camden, where he was then living, and on my return to England I went down to that charming little village to meet him and see more of his work.

The result of that visit was a special issue of *The Architectural*

Review, then being published in Boston by Bates & Guild, of which I was the Editor for some eleven or twelve years (following Mr. Saylor in 1906). That issue was devoted almost entirely to showing Mr. Griggs' drawings. A large number of the text illustrations were printed from blocks loaned by the Macmillan Company, but many of the full-page plates were given to reproductions of then unpublished drawings, shown at the size—or very near to the size—of the originals; so that an excellent idea of the artist's technique could be obtained.



Griggs' position as an etcher stands assured—as is suggested by the following texts, wherein his work may be studied: "The Etched Work of F. L. Griggs, R.A., R.E., F.S.A.," by Harold J. L. Wright (The Print Collectors' Club, 1941); "The Engraved Work of F. L. Griggs, A.R.A., R.E., Etchings and Dry-Points, 1912-28," a

catalogue by Russell George Alexander (Shakespeare Head Press, Stratford-on-Avon, 1928); "The Etchings of F. L. Griggs," by Campbell Dodgson (Print Collectors' Quarterly, Feb., 1924); "The Later Etched Work of F. L. Griggs, R.A.," by Campbell Dodgson (Print Collectors' Quarterly, Oct., 1933).

Most of his etchings—73 in all—were done between 1896 and 1903 for his early plates, and between 1912 and 1927 for his later and more important work. Many of these exist in six to eight states, and were worked over by Griggs, sometimes over eight to twelve years, before he was content. At Dovers House, which he designed and built for himself, and which Sir Frank Brangwyn now occupies, from 1921 on he pulled all his own etchings on his own press.



The present article, however, would call attention rather to his far less well-known work as a pen draftsman and designer of architectural and landscape compositions, in which his architectural confreres should be best fitted to appreciate his talents.

F. L. Griggs is one of the two best-known, and most successful,

artists concerned with the reproduction of an historical architectural period in a manner so vividly imagined that it appeals to the reader as a veritable contemporary record of a previously existing civilization. William Walcott is the other, and his imaginative etchings of the classical periods of Greece and Rome, peopled with hurrying toga-ed crowds, are veritable records of the life and architecture of the time. Walcott's work might, of course, also be compared to the etchings of Piranesi, who was, however, portraying a Rome of a period with which he was thoroughly familiar during his lifetime; but of the Gothic background that forms the motif of most of Griggs' compositions, there exists no other contemporary artist as a recorder capable of his vivid picturization of a long-departed phase of our inherited civilization.

Mr. Griggs has chosen to reproduce for us the more mystical and religious periods during which there developed the early Gothic and Romanesque styles in Medieval England, and so successfully that his drawings and etchings of these times seem to possess the mystic quality of Welsh King Arthur and his Table Round! But his scenes are seldom crowded with

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figures; rather, but one or two appear to give them scale and human reality.

The most unusual aspect of Griggs' skill, it should be emphasized, is that he was the *designer* of many of his compositions—designer of the architecture and the landscape gardening. Especially is this noted in his recreations of medieval and Gothic architecture and its settings. And so his pen and needle have reclaimed for many of us a time that—like some of the tales of William Morris—probably almost never was, a time when the church-inspired structures of old England vied with the best of the churches of the Isle de France. And, beyond the churches, too, he recreates for us the humble and picturesque charm of the early English village of Elizabethan and preceding times.

Only one other modern can be recalled within the same circle, and that would be Daniel Vierge, especially with those best-known of his Spanish sketches, the pen drawings for Don Pablo de Segovie and some of his picaresque companions.

In the course of the correspondence carried on during the year that intervened between my visit to Chipping-Camden and the publication of the *Review* article, Mr.

Griggs wrote a number of interesting notes that disclosed both something of his original training and his personal feeling about the processes and methods of pen drawing. These notes—which have never been published—have recently been recovered, and from them are gleaned the following excerpts—used more or less in what is intended to be a progressive sequence, but which were in the first case merely disjointed comments on various of the paragraphs of the submitted manuscript, or upon the proposed selection of examples of his work for its illustration.



With that explanation, that which follows is taken from Mr. F. L. Griggs' letters.

January 19, 1912: "Tomorrow I'm sending you three blocks of pencil drawings sent me by the *Studio* people. The blocks were made in Vienna by the people I told you of. I don't think there's any need to say more about myself—I've not gone along unusual lines in any way. Private lessons at school and later in oil and water-colors; a good deal of early sketching in pen-and-ink from nature—chiefly studies of trees; eighteen months with my friend C. E. Mal-

lows [an English architect and renderer, whose style is *quite* different from Mr. Griggs. Griggs spent two years with Mallows—from his 20th through his 22nd year], *life study at the Slade School*, and so on and so on, make up the history of my training, such as it is.

"Nor do you, I suppose, want to know where I've exhibited. Side hobbies and work have been architectural and garden designs, miniature painting, designing furniture, book plates and so on, but these do not bear much on the work you are considering, perhaps. It is more important that these books have been done because they've come my way, and that my real loves are water-color and etching. Let me know if there's anything else I can do, or tell you. Your letter-press and letters, and so on, it would be best for me to see, as you kindly suggested.

"I hope the blocks Macmillan's have prepared and sent you will print well in your excellently got-up *Architectural Review*."



August 30, 1913: "I am returning your ms. with this, and also some notes—some of them you will see refer to paragraphs in your

pages which I have cancelled. Probably you will find paragraphs in my notes to make good these deletions. [The paragraphs, by the writer, were mostly those of the more laudatory character.] Briefly, I prefer that an article as a whole should just deal with my work as expressed in my pen and pencil drawings; its successes, such as they are, and its shortcomings. I have no great opinion of it myself, because I never tried to make it showy or startling, or even to get some of the more important pictorial qualities of good landscape work into it—such as very complete tones and chiaroscuro—still less much imagination or poetry. I've preferred to treat them—well, as simple topographical sketches, sound as far as they go and as far as I can ensure. Trickiness or showiness I loathe, though I realize that in these days one's chances of success (of one kind) depend upon one's ability to make an instant appeal—to the inartistic!

"I don't want biographical details in it—except such as appear in the work itself—nor references to any of my aims or ambitions unfulfilled, except, again, insofar as you may yourself deduce them from my work as lying within my power.

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F. L. GRIGGS: ALMSHOUSES AT QUANTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Published in *Highways and Byways in Buckinghamshire*, 1907 (Macmillan)



F. L. GRIGGS

LONG GRENDON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

(Original 6½" long)

Published in *Highways and Byways in Buckinghamshire*, 1907 (Macmillan)



F. L. GRIGGS: A GARDEN WALL AND RIVER GATE
(Original 6" wide)

Published in *The Studio*

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Do you know this building?

THE CARSON PIRIE SCOTT BUILDING (1899-1904), CHICAGO
 LOUIS HENRI SULLIVAN, ARCHITECT
 Photograph by Chicago Architectural Photography Co.

Journal
The AIA
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"I should be glad if you could hint at what is a very real and (sometimes) depressing fact about the 'Highways and Byways' illustrations, and indeed about commissioned work generally, and that is that one *has* to draw very literally; that imagination and the creative faculty have very little to do, and that even one's own sense of composition has to be set aside in the demand for *representations* of actual scenes, and the likelihood of comparisons by people whose standard of art is the camera; who, after all, in these days, are the majority. They will *not* stand more or less than linear or tonal photography from the topographical artist. One draws a thing because the author thinks it pretty, or its literary or historical interest demand it; the artist's personality is invited to contribute its quota of interest too late for them to be works of art, in the sense that they might have been if the dictum be true that 'Nature is one thing, human intellect another; and Art is the union of both'. Moreover, the wretchedness (perhaps I ought to say the cheapness) of modern reproduction and the worse printing make *serious* effort useless.

"There are exceptions, of course, but as a rule modern book illus-

tration does *not* give an artist anything like a chance. It is in work done for his own amusement, or entirely upon his own initiative, that one must look, speaking generally, for an artist's best expression of his own art.



"But you ask for some details regarding materials. Personally, I'm happiest far when making drawings for my *own* pleasure and use, when I have the first pen that comes to hand and an odd assortment of old papers of varying texture and colour—*those* are limitations an artist must respect; they aren't so arbitrary and annoying. Limitations are good for an artist, providing they are of the right kind and not damaging to his self-respect. Once *that* has gone, it's all up with him.

"For general purposes, including reproductions, perhaps a thick hotpressed Whatman paper is best; there are many good inks—those not waterproof being more fluid and sympathetic.

"But there are *many* good papers, even this 'cream laid note' [on which he was writing] would be good for pen. For pencil, it's more difficult to get exactly the right kind. I like a mounted Chi-

nese paper best. The old saying is really awfully true: 'Bad workmen always complain of their tools'."



Among the notes as to changes in the manuscript, the following sections may be of value: "I have deleted one of two paragraphs upon this page, because it is rather in the nature of biographical detail, and also because, while Mr. Mallows and I were great friends, and much as I admired his work as an expression of his personal tendencies and ideas, I never admired it technically, and still less was influenced by it.

"I don't think I've allowed myself to be influenced consciously by anyone to the exclusion of others. Of course, we are all 'heirs of the ages', and a man falls, sooner or later, who turns his back on tradition, or thinks himself entirely original.

"Again, he lacks that most necessary component of artistic composition, sincerity, if he strives for novelty for its own sake. But to attempt to found a style upon *another* man's work is a mistake, and a confession of inability; it sometimes can be downright dishonesty!

"For the erased paragraph you

might substitute something like: 'At about this time he abandoned architecture as a profession, upon the advice of his friend, Mr. C. E. Mallows, with whom he had worked, and that of Mr. Joseph Pennell.' You might add that I feel I owe much to such men as Mackenzie, Storer, Nash, De Wint and Cotman—and many other early nineteenth-century water-colorists—many of whom drew for reproduction by the then best-known and most popular medium of copper and steel plate engraving. . . .

"Most of my drawings *now* are, it is true, made completely on the spot, including the more detailed ones—such as the Ely Towers, but earlier I had to do most of my drawings from *studies* made on the spot. I still feel that for work of a more real artistic value, the latter method is best—a process of selection and rejection taking place more or less subconsciously in the artist's mind. . . .

"Modern etching does not move me much—beyond the work of Meryon, Haden, Palmer and Bone. Earlier work is much more satisfying to me. After all, the earlier men are the real sources: Rembrandt of Haden; Claude of

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Palmer; Piranesi of Bone and so on—more or less in each instance.

"I *loathe* conscious plagiarism of any kind, and always, when work-

ing, prefer to make my mind a blank when there is any temptation to think of other men's designs or drawings."

Self-Help

By D. K. Este Fisher, Jr.

THE PRESENTATION, by B. K. Johnstone in the July JOURNAL, of an apparent general absence of architects in small communities seems to touch on several points which have been brought up by this commentator from time to time. The subject seems to lead naturally to a number of questions, the answers to which would be worth thinking through.



Why does the architect *not* occupy the position in the community to which his education and the importance of his potential contribution to community welfare should entitle him?

Why are so many architects congregated in the larger centers, to the neglect of the smaller cities and towns?

Does the average young architect's training fit him to set up

shop and to make a creditable contribution in communities such as Mr. Johnstone describes?

Consider the medical profession. To be sure, its members occupy a very personal and intimate relationship to the health and welfare of their milieu. That position is one of long traditional standing, but it is also *maintained*, not only by the daily professional stint, but by constant participation in matters of public concern both directly and indirectly connected with health and general welfare. There are almost always *doctors* on public and quasi-public commissions and committees; their advice is sought and they *find* time to give it. Doctors, as a class, seem to keep up to date—really up to the minute—not only on medical matters, through the medical publications and by almost daily meeting and discussion with each other, but by

a marked "aliveness" to matters of general public interest. Doctors lunch together, fish together, play golf and bridge together, and their talk covers the whole range of human needs. To a degree, lawyers do the same—but do architects? Too often they seem to be sealed each in his "ivory tower"—too often at daggers' points with their brothers over some (perhaps fancied) trespassing on posted fields. We speak of "a position" to which we are "entitled." Perhaps we need to hark back to a British aristocratic point of view: that culture and education and experience impose a burden, which those who have them must bear; that our professional position is one we are *obligated*, individually, to maintain in the public interest.



Mr. Johnstone's statistics may not seem too convincing that "a living" is to be found in small communities. The problem is a little like a kitten chasing its tail, and proof of the thesis may need some pioneering. We are amply conscious that ordinarily but a small percentage of building-permit values are created by architects. Can we expect to handle *more*, unless and until our performance con-

vinces the public that we are as indispensable to healthy communities as the doctors are to healthy people? It is to be assumed that architects crowd into the larger centers because they believe that *there* are to be found the larger opportunities — more cultivated contacts and facilities, more people who understand and want architects' services, more money to be spent on buildings, a faster-moving practice. How many succeed in finding these things in satisfying degree? No doubt doctors feel the same way, but there are generally competent and respected and happy doctors in the smaller towns. Perhaps many of the architects who eke out a harried and precarious existence in the swirl of big city life—"little frogs in a big puddle"—could have been competent and respected and happy in smaller communities if they had settled in and discharged the obligation of their birthright and training.

Consider again the medical profession—particularly the young doctor. He is trained in school and college much as the young architect is, and then goes to "medical school." There, his schooling is not only in classroom and laboratory, but in the clinics and wards and operating rooms—"on the job"

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—“in the field,” to you. A goodly proportion of his teachers are actively practicing physicians and surgeons—“architects,” “builders,” to you. Almost all young medical graduates follow their schooling by one or more years as “internes” and “residents” in hospitals—again, “in office and field,” under the guidance and stimulation of the active practitioners of their calling. Only after this apprenticeship, is the young doctor ready to practice on

his own. In what degree do our architectural schools and our much talked-of but apparently dormant “Mentor system” equip young architects to go out into the smaller cities, to “buy the practice” of a superannuated and beloved practitioner, or to “hoe a new row,” and carry on with credit the tradition of Iktinos, of Michaelangelo, of Wren and of Jefferson? Have we not also the equivalent of the Hippocratic Oath?

Here Stands the B.A.I.D.

By Otto Teegan

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, B.A.I.D.

DESPITE trying times and with small registrations in all architectural schools, the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design is continuing its work and has arranged its schedule of programs next year in correlation with the variable terms in the schools. It is a going organization.

As you may or may not know, the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design has no endowments, no state subsidies, no sugar daddies. (Almost every architectural school has at least one of those three or it would be out of operation today.) The

Institute depends entirely on its income from student registration fees, professional membership dues, and an occasional donation from some firm or corporation for whose benefit a competition is conducted. It has its own building, built during the height of the 1928 boom when everyone was rich, at least on paper, and it is still paying the interest on a large mortgage!

Under these conditions, and particularly since occasionally someone, to make conversation and usually in complete ignorance of the facts, fires at it a broadside, you

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may well wonder why the Institute continues. What compels a group of loyal and interested individuals, numbering roughly 400 scattered nationwide, to carry on against such odds? Would it not be easier to say the job has been finished, and chuck the whole thing?



Evidently this group is not of that opinion. It does not feel that its work has been completed. It believes this organization has too great a heritage to throw away lightly. It believes in fact, that the B.A.I.D., which has functioned for more than fifty years, besides being one of the stepping-stones in the development of architecture and architectural education in this country, constitutes one of our profession's rarest possessions. A group of professional men devoted to the ideal of contributing their time and services to student education, for as long a period as this organization has done, is unique in this country. In any profession, but our own, it would have been recognized and fostered by the parent body long ago.

A few months ago a Smoker was held in the Institute's building, to which the Trustees invited a group of some eighty members, educators

and young spirited non-members. The essential purpose of this Smoker was to discuss the status of architectural education in this country and more particularly the relation of the Institute's work to it. The Trustees were frankly inviting these men, and a few women, to give the benefit of their opinions regarding any changes in policy or methods that would allow the Institute to carry on its work more effectively. It was expected that some of the non-members would not only be frank, but brutal, in suggesting everything from complete elimination of the B.A.I.D. to fantastic changes in operation having no relation to the work of the past but, with few exceptions, all present voiced enthusiastic support of the Institute's endeavors. Suggestions for changes in detail were numerous, but the concensus of opinion was that an organization like the B.A.I.D. was needed in our system of architectural education and that it seemed to be doing its job well. One educator expressed it as follows:

"We have a definite American tradition and way of life which have shaped the present and will continue to influence future living, not only in this country but in the many parts of the world to which

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American culture will be carried. Most thinking people accept these facts, and are proud of them. Our schools should consequently be American in character and in method of procedure, the latter evolved from a discerning evaluation of our regional needs and traditional characteristics. Many of us believe that we can thus form honest and brilliant architects and artists. The B.A.I.D. should and does subscribe to these ideas.

"The schools of architecture throughout the country have in common one major aim: to turn out adequately trained students, capable of developing into efficient practitioners. It is our belief that to achieve this end, each school should have the freedom to formulate its curriculum and methods according to its own theories and capacities. But we all teach the major subject, design, in essentially the same way; namely, by the problem method. In order to allow both faculty and students to test the results of their work, some means must be found whereby a comparison of the work in design can be made."

The B.A.I.D. has for many years fulfilled this necessity. This, as a matter of fact, has been the principle and the only principle upon

which the Institute has functioned. It has never interfered in the formulation of any school's curriculum or methods. It has never proselyted. Its contribution is solely as an aid in the subject of design, by providing problems written by men of authority, and judging the comparison of students' solutions of those problems by experienced and able jurors. Its work is as simple as that, with no bias involved whether this or that method of teaching design is best. It is concerned only with stating the problem and judging the results.



It is true there have been many phases and many changes in the point of view at work on this simple mission, a natural evolution based on the principle that as times change so do the problems around us. "A Refuge for an Exalted Monarch on an Island" seemed an appropriate title for a problem twenty-five years ago. Today, however, not only do few monarchs remain, but neither students nor jurists are interested in them. During at least the past ten years the titles of B.A.I.D. problems have been as up to date and progressive as any could be, and still serve a purpose. "A Motel," "A Rural

Shopping Unit," "A Building for Occupational Therapy," "A Commercial Laundry and Dry Cleaning Establishment," "A Merchandise Display Center," "A Motion Picture Theater and Commercial Recreation Center," these are a few of the titles that are on the agenda for the school year 1944-1945.



Authors of B.A.I.D. problems within the last few years have included such names as Joseph Hudnut, George Howe, Paul P. Cret, John Root, Richard J. Neutra, Carlos Contreras, John A. Holabird, Timothy Pflueger, Walter Gropius, Roy Childs Jones, and many others purposely selected from various parts of the country to give varied expression and experience in the subjects on which they were requested to write.

Most judgments are held at stipulated times in New York where it is possible to find the widest variety of technical and professional talent among men who are willing to serve as jurors. Until the war, many judgments were held outside New York, as in St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, Washington and Philadelphia. The

purpose of out-of-town judgments was to allow the architects in those cities to participate in this work in ways other than writing the programs, and without exception the response has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

The writing of the program by the authors is not the beginning and end of such a problem. These programs are reviewed carefully by a committee which spends many hours revising and making corrections, sometimes making drastic changes in order to bring the requirements within the student's ability, or within a time limit. The Institute is aware that an architect specializing in a certain field may not necessarily write the best student program, although he may know his subject thoroughly. Nor is there any reason why he should understand the capabilities or limits of the students in the time allotted for the problem. That is where the B.A.I.D. Program Committee comes in. Although respecting the authority of the author in his subject, the committee must translate his desires into possible requirements.

During the year 1943-1944—and the practice will be continued next year, since it has proven successful—a new statement of prob-

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lems called "free problems" was instituted in order to allow students to select local sites, so that their solutions would be adapted to local regions, and actual sites which could be visited. "Free problems" are in the nature of general subjects, such as "Community Center," calling for several units but with no detailed requirements, no description of site, no stipulation for drawings. Each individual is at liberty to determine these last factors according to choice, as a result of preliminary and developed study. Or the subject may be a simple investigation inherently quite well defined, as "A Library For a Town of 15,000 People," but again with site and details of presentation left open for determination. The factors and requirements which influence the design must be indicated or noted on the student's submission.

Some non-corresponding schools have stated that although they find the B.A.I.D. problems and method of judgment most commendable, the dates on which problems are issued and submissions due do not fit in with the school's schedule. This is undoubtedly true in many cases, for it is an impossible task for the Institute to meet each school's schedule. However, at

present, due primarily to the many odd schedules and semesters required by the war, each regular problem issued by the Institute allows a period of ten weeks in which to do a problem of five or six consecutive weeks. With such flexibility it is hard to see why, if genuinely interested, such schools could not find it possible to fit in at least one or two problems a semester.



There are, as is quite natural, many points of view regarding the best method for training young architects. The B.A.I.D. is not prepared, and does not attempt, to provide all the essentials included in an architectural curriculum. It supplies a part in the teaching of design, and it is well to remember that it is but a part, since the student's instructor is most essentially the other part. Schools have been prone to accept or reject the services of the Institute on the basis of whether they did or did not like the programs, the juries or the competition.

In the last analysis, however, these are but details. The important thing for our educators to remember is that whatever the B.A.I.D. has done or may be do-

ing for student education, it is comprised of an ever-growing number of earnest professionals who have dedicated themselves to be of assistance in any way they can to student education. They are now following a pattern laid down many years ago, although it has changed much from its original form, because it is the only pattern in which they seem to be able to function. If some of our educators believe that the efforts of these men are not directed to as great a useful-

ness as might be, they should come forward with suggestions whereby the Institute could be more effective. The B.A.I.D. stands ready to serve the profession as best it can, but would like to assume its responsibility in the spirit of cooperation with the other forces within the profession. Let us hope that in the very near post-War future such a cooperation will be as possible as it would be beneficial to the entire student body and profession.

Highlights of the Technical Press

The Architectural Forum, Sept.: Shopping Center, Linda Vista, Calif.; Earl F. Giberson, Whitney R. Smith, assoc. archts.; Ernest C. Hillman, struct. engr.; Harold Dankworth, lands. archt.; 13 pp. t. & ill. A New System of Office Partitions, designed by Konrad Wachsmann; 4 pp. t. & ill. Living Memorials, by Charles D. Maginnis and by Archibald MacLeish; 8 pp. t. & ill.

The Architectural Record, Aug.: Olin Hall of Chemical Engineering, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.; Shreve, Lamb & Harman, architects; 8 pp. t. & ill. Resort Hotel (proposed) for Post-War Travelers, Las Vegas, Nev.; Walter Wurdeman and Weldon

Becket, archts; 3 pp. t. & ill. The General Hospital, Building Types Study in Collaboration with *Modern Hospitals*; 42 pp. t. & ill.

Civil Engineering, Sept: Engineers Will Build the China of Tomorrow, by L. F. Chen; 4 pp. t. & ill. Should There Be an Engineer in the President's Cabinet?: by H. L. Fruend; 2 pp. t. Design of Built-Up Plywood Panels, by Robert D. Scott of FHA; 3 pp. t. & ill.

Journal, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Aug.: a hospital issue, 25 pp. t. & ill.; Sanatoria, by William R. Souter; The Planning of Nurses' Homes, by Fred L. Townley; The Small

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General Hospital, by Harold J. Smith; Hospital Kitchens, by Chester C. Woods.

Liturgical Arts (quarterly), Aug.: The Artistic Debate, by Charles D. Maginnis, F.A.I.A.; 2 pp. A Diocesan Building Project, by Maurice Lavanoux; 3 pp. t. & ill. Notes on Enameling, by Forrest C. Crooks; 2½ pp. t. & ill.

Pencil Points, Aug.: American Architecture Makes Brilliant and Unique Contribution to Psycho-

logical Welfare (Exhibition at the National Museum, Stockholm); 1 p. t. Stores (mostly designs prepared for Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co., some in color; 32 pp. t. & ill. Toward an Old Architecture, by Robert Woods Kennedy; 6 pp. t. & ill.

Southwest Builder and Contractor, Aug. 18: University of California Names Architects for Post-War Construction Projects—David C. Allison (of Allison & Allison) supervising architect; 5½ pp. t. & ill.



Architects Read and Write

Letters from readers—discussion, argumentative, corrective, even vituperative.



IN LIEU OF TAXES

BY CHARLES W. KILLAM, F.A.I.A.

MR. MORGAN'S STATEMENT in the July Journal (p. 24) that "the Housing Authorities are paying into the city treasuries amounts equal to, or greater than the city's costs of furnishing the customary city services (street cleaning and lighting, garbage collection, sewer service, police patrol, etc.) to the slum clearance areas" is not in accord with the figures.

For instance, the 1941-43 report of the Housing Authority in Mr. Morgan's own city of Philadelphia

states that three projects, James Weldon Johnson Homes, Tasker Homes and Richard Allen Homes, cost \$15,345,000, accommodated 2,859 families, or a cost of \$5,370 each, and paid \$23,896 in lieu of taxes in the year October 1, 1942 to September 30, 1943. This amounts to \$8.36 taxes per family. If this is equal to the "city's costs" why do other families in houses costing \$5,370 each pay any more in taxes?

A PWA project in Cambridge,

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Mass., is assessed at \$6,200 per unit, which is about two-thirds of its actual cost. The payment in lieu of taxes amounts to \$17 per family. A privately owned \$6,200 house would have paid 1943 taxes of \$247 or 14½ times as much.

The first four USHA projects in Boston are assessed at \$5,550 per family, which is about three-quarters of their actual cost. The payment in lieu of taxes is estimated in the 1936-40 report of the Boston Housing Authority to be \$23,000 or \$7 per family. A privately owned \$5,550 house would have paid \$170 in taxes, or 24 times as much.

Mr. Morgan does not mention three important city services. For instance, the Cambridge, Mass.,

maintenance budget in 1940 included: Charities, 22.23%; Debt Service, 18.10%; Education, 18.03%; or a total of 58.36%. That is, more than half of the maintenance budget is spent on items which are not reduced, much less "eliminated," by the housing project, with the possible exception of the charity expenditures where some of the project tenants might have been receiving help on their rent payments.

In connection with alleged reductions in police and fire department costs, can Mr. Morgan give us examples of a significant number of cases (not just one favorable case), which show reductions in public works, police and fire department personnel, due to the building of a housing project?

REBUTTAL

BY DAVID H. MORGAN

IF Mr. KILLAM had carefully perused the paragraph on page 24 immediately preceding the paragraph to which he refers regarding city costs being "not in accord with the figures," he would not have as avidly pounced on my statement: "The Housing Authorities are paying into the city treas-

uries amounts equal to, or greater than, the city's costs of furnishing the customary city services."

It is my opinion, based upon these known facts of blighted areas, excessive city costs in relation to city income by respective area, that to compare taxes paid by a new slum-clearance dwelling unit in

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relation to taxes paid by a privately owned comparable dwelling unit is a fallacy. Rather, a more equitable comparison would be to correlate taxes paid by slum project areas prior to demolition and subsequent to completion of new construction, and that these be on the common denominator of a new slum-clearance dwelling unit.

To illustrate: I have recently received such figures from the Chester Housing Authority, Chester, Penna., for three slum-clearance Public Housing Projects that are now operating there. The three projects combined total 1,000 dwelling units, and on the basis of total taxes received by the City, Schools and County for the three areas, prior to acquisition by the Authority, the records show such taxes to be \$12.86 per new dwelling unit average. For the fiscal year 1943-44, the City, schools and county will receive from the Authority \$29.84 basic tax per dwelling unit average.

Further, after paying all charges (amortization, interest, repairs, maintenance, replacements, administration and miscellaneous), it is estimated that the three tax-imposing bodies will also receive for this same fiscal year an additional sum in taxes of \$19.74 per dwell-

ing unit average, which shows that a total of \$49.58 taxes will be paid per dwelling unit for the current year, in contrast with \$12.86 per dwelling unit paid on the same common denominator unit prior to acquisition of sites. These figures do not take into account savings to the City by reason of substantial reduction of anti-social conditions, which as a matter of record are the following:

In the case of one project of 350 units, fires prior to acquisition averaged 10 per year. Last year the project had one fire amounting to \$25.00. On this same project, juvenile delinquency averaged 21 cases per year prior to acquisition, and since project occupancy there have been no cases. Police calls prior to acquisition of site averaged 25 per year; since completion of project there have been no police calls.

At another project at Chester of 300 dwelling units, there was an average of 25 fires per year prior to acquisition, and since completion of project there has been one fire in the past year. On this same project in Chester, juvenile delinquency cases prior to acquisition of the property averaged 30 per year. With new construction completed and 100% occupancy,

last year there was one case. Record of police calls shows average of 30 per year prior to acquisition, and for the past year there have been 2. You will note that social and contagious diseases comparatives should also be taken into account.

My information leads me to state that the above-cited cases of Chester are fair average examples of what has taken place in the development of the Public Housing Program throughout the country. Mr. Killam specifically calls attention to the projects of the Phila-

delphia Housing Authority! Subsequent to receipt of the above-mentioned figures of the Chester Program, my investigation of the Philadelphia situation has lead me to conclude that its picture in detail is very similar to the figures I have recorded above for Chester.

Recognizing the foregoing, it is not inconceivable that by pursuing such a program to its ultimate conclusion, on the basis of a comprehensive master city plan, the taxes of such privately owned dwelling units as exemplified by Mr. Killam might be substantially reduced.

SOUTH TEXAS IN NORMANDY

BY CAPT. WILLIAM A. McELROY

IT may interest you to know something of what I am doing, or rather, for the immediate present, what is being done to me.

This letter is being written under complete field conditions. I am sitting under an apple tree in Normandy on an ammunition box and writing on my knee. Within four feet is my pup tent and bedroll, and four yards away a very important and much used foxhole; and our best friend, the amphibious helmet which, in addition to acting in a protective measure, is our

washbasin, our laundry tub, seat, wastebasket, hammer-shovel. Over by the hedge, carefully camouflaged, are our jeeps and trucks, and further down are the enlisted men.

Our first night here we were within a few miles of the battle lines and for the next few days the roar of large and small guns was continuous, day and night. We were never previously instructed in the proper use of the foxhole, but under the stress of intense anti-aircraft barrage from Bofors and

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machine guns, and with shell fragments dropping around you, it is astonishing how quickly one attains a proficiency in its use. On my first dive I went without shoes and in underwear only. I attribute the shaking of my knees and chattering of my teeth to that condition. Other members of the detachment have not been so charitable in their appraisal. The second time that night I put on my clothes, and the third time I left them on the rest of the night. One of the officers said he put a cigarette in his mouth to ease his nerves, but his teeth were chattering so actively that he couldn't keep it there. We have become "old-timers" now and, except for especially severe shrapnel, we stay in bed and put our helmet over our head until Jerry moves on or back in his planes. The other day we were sitting under some apple trees listening to a lecture. Nearby some enlisted men were putting up a large tent for our use during rainy weather. A sudden and violent burst of ack-ack guns interrupted, and we grabbed our helmets and looked just in time to see a German plane go down in flames nearby. The funny part was that the tent was riddled with holes from the shrapnel. A couple

of men were injured slightly but not enough, I think, to receive the purple heart.

It was our good fortune to have a grandstand seat recently, so to speak, at the "greatest show on earth." It was the occasion of the concentrated attack of 3,000 planes against the enemy lines. The day was clear, and at about 9:30 A.M. the Forts and Liberators, with their umbrella of P-39's, etc., started coming over in endless formations. We could see them approach, silver birds in the sunlight, pass overhead and on to the front lines. We could plainly see the anti-aircraft fire, and here and there one or two planes go down in a trail of smoke. Bombs are dropped and the planes turned back, to be followed by others and yet others. For two and a half hours this continued.

For nineteen months I was connected with Area and Post Engineers. I have been, for the past six months, because of engineering and language experience, in Civil Affairs in charge of public works and utilities. Unfortunately, the language I had some knowledge of was not of any use to me, and for months I have studied German. I have, for the past two months studied French (rather unsuccessfully). How unsuccessfully I real-

ized only last night when I found myself in a French farmhouse drinking cider and with a cute little French girl on my knee—only eight years old, I assure you, else I should probably not have been at such a loss to know what to do. As it was, I looked at her, she looked at me. I smiled, she smiled; I patted her hair and in my best French asked her her name. She didn't understand me. She said something to me which I didn't understand. Her mother tried to explain and I didn't understand her. So I gave up that domestic approach, or at least that phase. Well, I do like cider, and my fellow offi-

cer (who speaks French even worse than the natives) and I are going back this P.M. on invitation. The poor lady's husband has been a German prisoner since the 1941 debacle—which is true of so many. We console them all we can.

Our detachment is composed of 20 officers and 22 enlisted men. We have ten British among the officers and all are specialists in their line. Our e.m. are especially high-class, college graduates, linguists—one of them being able to speak seven languages fluently. This is our toughening-up process prior to our taking over our department.

THE METRIC SYSTEM

BY JOHN J. KLABER, New York

THERE has recently been much agitation for the general use of the metric system in place of our present system of weights and measures. The proposition has been brought up in A.I.A. Chapter meetings, and some of them, notably the New York Chapter, of which I am a member, have passed resolutions supporting it. It seems to me, however, that there is something to be said on the other side.

There is, of course, no doubt that the metric system is theoretic-

ally superior to English measure. However, the practical difficulties of its introduction have not been given sufficient consideration. All our land records, our maps, our record drawings of buildings and public works, our shop drawings, are dimensioned in feet and inches and drawn at scales that could not easily be converted to the metric system. Our products and materials are standardized in sizes that are easily expressed in feet and inches; far less easily in centi-

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eters. In a word, the present system is so deeply rooted in our habits that conversion would be long and costly.

And would we really gain much by it? Has anything been gained by calling motion picture film 35 millimeters instead of $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches? Even the French, who invented the metric system, have never fully accepted its inhuman perfection. On my last visit to Paris, not so very many years ago, I still found wine being sold by the *chopine* and the *demi-setier*, beer by the *bock*, vegetables by the *livre*, grain by the *quintal*—all survivals from the

remote past. To say nothing of the sou, also a medieval unit, and still the common coin in which small transactions are measured, though legally non-existent.

We already use the metric system in foreign trade, except, of course, with the British Commonwealth. But foreign trade has always been a small part of our economy, and is likely to remain so for a long time to come. Perhaps, therefore, we would do better to use the measures to which we have so long been accustomed, and leave the attainment of perfection to our grandchildren.

Books & Bulletins

THE CONDITION OF MAN. By Lewis Mumford. 478 pp. 6"x9 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". New York: 1944: Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$5.

Third in the notable series that includes "Technics and Civilization" and "The Culture of Cities", this volume is a revelation and an inspiration. Was it Theodore Roosevelt who said that the height of his ambition was to write a history of civilization? Mumford's aim, conceived fifteen years ago, "has been to give a rounded interpretation of the development of modern man, and to show what changes in his plan of life are necessary if he is to make the most of

the vast powers that are now his to command—provided he be strong enough, wise enough, virtuous enough, to exercise command." After a survey of man's past—that survey astonishing in its erudition—tracing the impacts of the church; capitalism, protestantism, militarism, scientism, romanticism, mechanization and democracy, Mumford ventures a theme for the future, a future in which an age of expansion is giving place to an age of equilibrium. "The theme for the new period will be neither arms and the man nor machines and the man: its theme will be the resurgence of life, the displacement

of the mechanical by the organic, and the re-establishment of the person as the ultimate term of all human effort. . . . There is no consummation of life except in the perpetual growth and renewal of the human person: machines, organizations, institutions, wealth, power, culture, cities, landscapes, industries, are all secondary instruments in that process."

BUILT IN U. S. A.—1932-44. Edited by Elizaeth Mock; foreword by Philip L. Goodwin, F.A.I.A. 128 pp. 7¼"x 9¾"; illust. New York: 1944: The Museum of Modern Art. \$3.

Forty-seven selections representing the Museum's choice of significant U. S. architectural achievement in the last twelve years. Philip Goodwin, in a foreword, explains that an advisory committee was formed, widespread geographically; with the aid of these persons, and correspondence with more than 300 interested architects and laymen, the Executive Committee made its choice of material. Criticism of the fact that more categories of buildings are not represented is anticipated in the foreword. An even more violent criticism of the subject matter is likely to be heard in that it repre-

sents quite obviously the choice of those to whom anything not stylistically "Modern" is anathema. As a composite picture of what America has built in these twelve years, the book cannot be regarded as an impartial record. It is effective propaganda for a school of thought that does not, perhaps cannot, heed Philip Goodwin's own warning when he says: "With the trend away from the old style has come a new type of streamlined "modernistic" that needs to be combatted as vigorously as ever. The fight must go on against superficiality or sensationalism by the encouragement of sound, sincere building." . . .

HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, ALTON, ILL. By Guy Studý, F.A.I.A. 104 pp. 6"x9"; illust. St. Louis: 1943: Mound City Press, Inc.

This book is an example of the versatility expected of, and supplied by, the architect in his services to his client and community. Called upon to complete a church that had stood in an unfinished state for 82 years, the architect assumed the task of recording the history of an edifice that had its beginning in 1834 and about which developed much of the significant life of the community.

"WHEN the master of Balliol, in Oxford, was asked about the examinations for admission to that ancient institution, he smiled and said: 'They are an impious attempt to fathom the depths of human ignorance.'"—CLAUDE M. FUESS, Head Master of Phillips Academy.

The Editor's Asides

ONCE AGAIN, in our generation, rises the question of War Memorials. Kenneth Reid, Editor of *Pencil Points* opens the debate with an August editorial, "Memorials? Yes—But No Monuments!" In considering appropriate ways of reminding future generations that men have died in the cause of human freedom, Mr. Reid asks, "Can it be done by 'monuments'," and answers emphatically, No! "Let there be memorial parks and playgrounds and schools and community buildings. Let gardens and groves and forests be planted for the delight and benefit of the people. Let memorial scholarships be founded to give opportunity to the worthy to pursue studies directed in the interests of the general welfare. . . . Let whatever we do have a truly social purpose and a practical social result."

The argument is not new. It was heard after the last war. Today, with our greater concern in the making of a better world for all the people, our great emphasis upon social betterment, Mr. Reid's contention will find plenty of advocates.

There is, however, another side to the question, and it could hardly

be stated more effectively than it is by Mr. Maginnis and Mr. Archibald MacLeish in the pages *The Architectural Forum* gives in its September issue to "Living Memorials". Mr. Maginnis recalls the controversy over the national memorial to Lincoln; when two alternatives challenged the consideration of Congress—a great highway across the continent, or an abstract monument. Of the monument which was built, says Mr. Maginnis, "Its only critics are the philosophers of modernism who find offense in its reactionary style. . . . What is triumphant in the concept is its absolute preoccupation with its theme, the integrity of its symbolism."

Whatever shape our war memorials take—and conceivably they may take forms which emphasize no memory of war itself—Mr. Maginnis feels that they will be convincing only if they embody the spiritual principle. Usefulness in a war memorial is the very attribute that disqualifies it. "If, for example, a gymnasium be a pressing community need, it should be satisfied as a direct civic obligation. To take unction from the process by claiming for it the merit of a

war memorial is a hypocritical sort of economy which Ralph Adams Cram once likened to the disingenuousness of presenting a pair of rubbers to a child at Christmas. . . . The intention of the tribute should be as clear and immediate as the gesture of placing the wreath upon a tomb."

To Mr. MacLeish, the question is not whether a useful memorial would be more useful than another, but rather whether a useful memorial would be better *as* a memorial. "It has been broadly hinted," says Mr. MacLeish, that we should "make this sentimental monument-building serve a useful purpose, something the town will be glad to have fifty years from now when the war is forgotten—and the dead are forgotten! But, of course, it is precisely to keep the people of the town from forgetting the dead and forgetting the war that the memorial is to be built. To turn it into something else which cannot keep the memory of the dead alive is to cheat the town of its dearest hope. And the cheat will be no more excusable because a bronze plaque to the left of the front door, or a marble panel by the drinking-fountains, calls the building a memorial."

Then, having thrown utility out of the window, Mr. MacLeish has his compunctions and reaches for it again. "Utility is entitled to consideration, not as utility, but as an aid in accomplishing what the memorial was intended to accomplish. . . . A building which relates to the life of the town—which is part of the life of the town—may survive other and more permanent things and may speak as well as it knows how to speak when they are silent. . . . If the men and women of the American villages and towns would ask themselves: What is there in this town which is most like it? What is there here that speaks of the town most movingly to those who think back to it? What is there here *they* must have thought of when they thought of home? And what could be done with that corner, that square, that grove, that brook, to make it hold the image of their longing for it so that other later men would feel it also? . . ."

Well, the profession of architecture will be expected to have thoughtful opinions on what form our war memorials should take. Paul P. Cret is chairman of an Institute committee now studying the subject. This committee's findings should make good listening.

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